DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 058 338 08 UD 011 994

TITLE	Community Control and Social Service Agencies.
INSTITUTION	YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, Ill. Career Options Research and Development (CORD).
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Educational Research and Development (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO	BR-7-0329
PUB DATE	Sep 71
NOTE	8p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Organization; Administrative Personnel; *Black Community; *Community Control; *Community Services; Economically Disadvantaged; Helping Relationship; Human Services; Inner City; Power Structure; Racism; Social Change; Social Responsibility; *Social Services; Systems Approach

ABSTRACT

In this report, community control is examined at it relates to social and human service organizations. Community is defined at the agency which is the target of control. Community control is a major issue for non-white Americans who are increasingly concerned with owning and controlling those institutions that exist within the boundaries of their communities. The most relevant yet controversial issues facing social and human service agencies are those of community control and the challenge by the non-white staffs of these agencies for the leadership role in changing the agencies' images and functions in their communities, from decision-making to service delivery. There has been a general awakening of minority Americans to the neo-colonial system under which agencies operate and minority Americans work. Where minority workers have moved into administrative positions with potential power and begun to develo viable communication with the non-white community of agency employees, the agency reaction has come under the guise of the need for economic and efficiency analyses. Use of various systems approaches has allowed agencies to control budget and policies in an attempt to stifle minority workers' demands for accountability. Such actions on the part of agency administrations point out the racist patterns that are woven throughout their systems, and that real commitments and real attempts to change will not easily come about. (Author/JM)

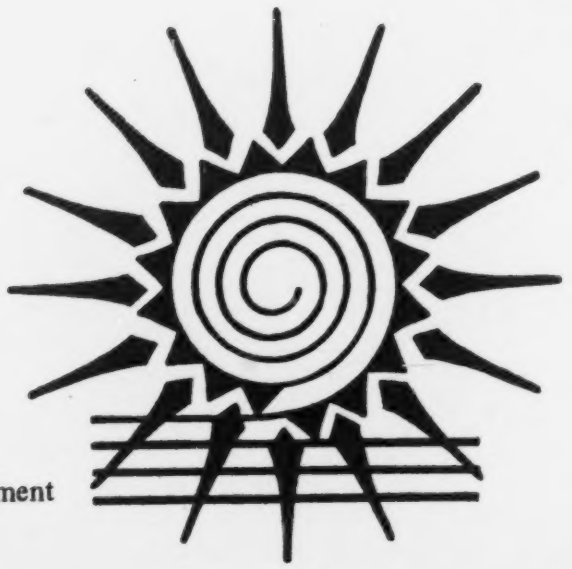
ED 058338

COMMUNITY CONTROL AND SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

September 1971

VT 011994



CORD
Career Options
Research and Development

CAREER OPTIONS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, Project No. 7-0329, was supported by the U.S. Office of Education, National Center for Educational Research and Development, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, under Section 4(c) of the Vocational Education Act, 1963, in a grant to the YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO, 19 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60603.

This document was prepared by the Career Options Research and Development staff:

Robert K. Soong, Executive Director
Jean Wetzel, Associate Director
Barry Warren, Program Director
Jeanette B. Hall, Program Director
George A. Kich, Program Assistant

as a supporting Advisory Document to the Final Report for the three-year project, 1968-1971.

Contractors undertaking projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinion do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education or YMCA position or policy.

COMMUNITY CONTROL AND SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Social service cannot be relevant to the pathology of the ghetto, except to reinforce it, if it encourages even subtly the dependency of people of the ghetto--because to encourage dependency is to rob the individual of the sense of his own dignity and to strengthen his feelings of inferiority.

Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (1965)

3

Community Control is a concept with enormous significance for non-white Americans who are increasingly concerned with owning and controlling those institutions that exist within the boundaries of their communities. But we must understand that the concept of community is relative, depending upon who is involved. For example, community can be viewed as an area where people share similar interests, needs, and problems; where power, authority, and decision-making are primarily controlled by the people who reside there. However, for non-white Americans,[1] power, authority, and decision-making are controlled by those outside of their communities.

In this report, we will examine community control as it relates to social and human service agencies (agencies utilizing all person-to-person relations and group processes in the helping professions, *e.g.*, Boys Clubs, the Young Men's Christian Association, Salvation Army, Young Women's Christian Association). For this purpose, the community will be defined as the agency which is the target of control.

The most relevant yet controversial issues facing social and human service agencies are those of community control and the challenge by the non-white staffs of these agencies for the leadership role in changing the agencies' images and functions in their communities, from decision-making to service delivery. These agency employees have recognized "...why the white establishment is so up tight about it; their ingrained need to control (non-white) people is being challenged."[2]

Liberal reform in the United States for minority Americans was extensive during the Kennedy-Johnson era, brought on by the problems of urban unrest resulting from frustration, discrimination, and political indifference. Social and human service agencies rushed to become *relevant*, and were given easy access to funds for the implementation of new and expanded programs. Programs were developed to deal with social and economic problems affecting non-white Americans, *e.g.*, temporary summer employment for youth, camping programs, training programs, and the like. There is no doubt that these programs were needed and that their implementation represented a step forward. However, white paternalism was still in evidence, and minority people were still "the objects rather than the subjects of civic action...."[3] The nation had simply decided to decrease its unemployment rolls.

Agencies developed programs quickly, announced proposals in vague and general terms, and obtained approval for funds. It can be safely stated that the designers of these programs too often possessed a relatively low-level

awareness of the social and economic situations of minority Americans. The program designers were typical suburban whites who lived outside of the non-white community.

These new and expanded programs for minority groups gave agencies an opportunity to begin changing and enhancing their image. Many were able to shed the "Christianization" and "moral training" roles for one of supposed "relevancy." Yet little or no effort was made to encourage indigenous participation in program development from within the agencies themselves, nor was there representation from the affected target groups. This neglect allowed agencies to continue the fostering of minority dependency on the "system." It also negated agency relevancy in the eyes of the masses of non-white Americans to be served. From the way things were being handled, one might assume that the new agency image of relevancy was directed towards private givers rather than towards those in need of services.

New programs and expanded funds enabled agencies to hire large numbers of indigenous non-white workers. Those with diplomas, degrees, and white contacts were hired for jobs at the mid-level range of responsibilities--jobs that had historically been closed to them. They were the administrators of special projects who ensured the broadest possible collection of data on the experiences of their projects and accurate profiles of their client groups. Others were given the responsibility of maintaining Centers and Branches in areas that had either completely undergone racial changes or were in transition. With inadequate resources and supports they were expected to operate a smoothly functioning Branch or Center. Little or no consideration was given to the fact that these places could not possibly operate in the image of white, middle class Centers and Branches.

Still other non-white personnel were hired who possessed a special kind of expertise--the kind that one gains through surviving in the ghetto. It was expected that these workers would identify with the minority people to be served, and would consequently establish rapport with them and continue to work towards the agency's goal of preparing non-whites for acceptability by whites.

It is significant, however, that although non-whites were hired as administrators and were given greater responsibility, the ultimate power, authority, and decision-making remained under the control of white executives. Non-white workers in social and human service agencies have begun to realize that these institutions ". . .are organized against the interests

of the people they were set up to serve."[4] They recognize that failure is an important tool of the agency. Programs that fail enable agencies to convince themselves and others of the need for expanded funds and more programs--while the problems of minority Americans continue to go unsolved.

The non-white agency workers have begun to reject the value system of the white controlling group. Slowly they have begun to realize that success which is gained at the expense of their own people and their own individual "inner identity" is undesirable, and that assimilation is impossible. The reality that they, as workers in these agencies, are financially dependent upon white establishment agencies is no longer significant enough reason for them to allow racist policies and practices in these agencies to go unchallenged. Employment and money are not the final answers to the problems they face.

Minority workers in agencies recognize that the change in government administrations (Johnson-Humphrey to Nixon-Agnew) has brought about a change in the nation's priorities from urban ills to environmental pollution and law enforcement. With the tightening of money directed toward social and economic problems in urban areas, agencies have been ridding themselves of people they consider radical and revolutionary-attempting to reduce the threat that large numbers of non-white workers pose to the agency *status quo* and control. Reduction in this labor force has succeeded only in teaching non-white workers that alternative methods and plans will have to be developed and applied if they hope to be successful in controlling service delivery and decision-making.

Having defined community control as it relates to social and human service agencies, discussed the general awakening of minority Americans to the neo-colonial system under which agencies operate and minority Americans work, and examined some of the conditions from which community control derives its current impetus, let's now look briefly at the reaction to this thrust for community control.

Where minority workers have moved into administrative positions with potential power and begun to develop viable communication with the non-white community of agency employees, the agency reaction has come under the guise of the need for economic and efficiency analyses *e.g.*, cost-benefit analyses, studies for planning, programming, budgeting systems.[5] Use of these various systems approaches has allowed agencies to control budget and policies in an attempt to stifle minority workers'

demands for accountability. Agency executives are expressing disillusionment with indigenous leadership, stating that it is not working, that the motivation is not there. It is obvious that the power of decision-making is the motivational factor, but advisory boards and committees of non-white people are deliberately set up to be powerless.

These kinds of actions on the part of agency administrations point out the racist patterns that are woven throughout their systems, and that *real commitments* and *real* attempts to change will not easily come about. *Who shall control* is the big issue facing non-white workers in social and human service agencies. Racism has been identified as an important factor in this struggle. It is exhibited where white people still insist on making all the significant decisions, at all levels, for non-white people. Non-whites who work for these agencies find their leadership role questioned in their own communities because of the paternalistic role the agencies play, while their self-respect and integrity are near destruction because of the emissary role agencies force them to play.

Professional, paraprofessional, and non-professional minority agency employees must begin to pool their intellects and resources to develop goals and objectives, and then

1. define their identity within the agency.
2. establish and constantly re-evaluate their own standard of control.
3. cultivate potential members for agency Boards who support their goals and objectives.
4. develop in-service training programs that involve skills relevant to non-white workers.
5. To develop methods of securing funds from traditional sources that are willing to relinquish the authority for determining how funds should be spent.

If social and human service agencies wish to continue to exist, then the message is clear: They must start by turning inward. Agencies must open themselves up so that the full and equal voice of minority employees can be heard. They must stop changing stations and turning a deaf ear when non-white people speak for themselves. They must surrender control of programs and services directed toward and delivered by non-white people to non-white people.

NOTES

1. 'The Chinese and Japanese [Americans] faced handicaps of color prejudice that were almost as strong as the Blacks faced, but very soon gained control of their internal communities, because their traditional ethnic culture and social organization had not beeen destroyed by slavery and internal colonization." Robert Blauner, Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt, Social Problems, 1969.

2. Preston Wilcox, Humanness In A Racist Society, Afram Associates, 1969.

3. Joseph Q. Wilson, Negro Politics, The Free Press, 1960.

4. Preston Wilcox, *op. cit.*

5. "The PPB system relies heavily on cost-benefit analysis which favors so-called hard programs, like highway construction, over such soft programs as job training . . ." John Kolesar, "The States and Urban Planning and Development," The States and The Urban Crisis, Alan K. Campbell, ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970.